

Wabash Reflections

A newsletter brought to you by the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission (WRHCC). The Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission, representing the Wabash River Heritage Corridor, shall protect and enhance the natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources and encourage sustainable development of the corridor.

WRHCC OFFERS ACCESS TO U.S. FOUNDATIONS

The WRHCC has recently subscribed to the Foundation Center's new searchable database of the 10,000 largest U.S. foundations. Communities and organizations can now turn to the WRHCC to help them search for grants to complete their projects. The database can search for grants or grantmakers. Identifying a list of criteria for the grants or grantmakers to fulfill can refine the search. If you would like the WRHCC to perform a search for you please contact Susan Benner at 765-427-1505 or by e-mail at sbenner@wrhcc.state.in.us

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Since the last WRHCC meeting in September I've been very fortunate to participate in the Mid America Trails and Greenways Conference, Sullivan County's Wabash River Expedition and the Big Rivers Watershed Workshop on the Mississippi River. Each event provided me an opportunity to spread the word about the WRHCC and learn what other communities are doing to protect and promote their natural resources.

There were in particular three highlights for me at the Mid America Trails and Greenways Conference. The discussions on developing water trails, how to work with the arts communities with regards to enhancing trails and the importance of tourism to trails and greenways. The information I gathered at the conference will be of value as we begin to develop and promote the Wabash River Water Trail. When the next conference takes place I really encourage you to attend.

Another wonderful opportunity I was able to assist with was Sullivan County's Wabash River Expedition. Due to high water levels on the river the 8th graders of Sullivan County were not able to raft on the Wabash this year, but as they say the show must go on. Instead the 8th graders were transported around by bus to several stations to learn about water quality, watersheds, Native Americans, identifying animal tracks, and much more. Our very own John Gettinger provided the students a very insightful presentation on historic events that took place on the Wabash in Sullivan County and how levees have protected cropland from the swollen banks of the Wabash. The Wabash River Expedition is wonderful program and the students really seem to enjoy it.

Louise Jewell in this newsletter provides a great account of her attendance at the Big Rivers Workshop on the Mississippi River. I attended the same workshop but on a different day and at another location on the Mississippi River, in Burlington Iowa. We were very fortunate to have unseasonably warm weather when I attended and it was a real treat to be out on the mighty Mississippi. The actions taken by the group sponsoring the workshop to clean up the Mississippi is incredible and their efforts should serve to be a source of inspiration to other river organizations. Louise and I will be sure to show off the pictures we took at the Commission Meeting November 12th in Delphi at the Wabash and Erie Canal Museum and Conference Center. If you would like to attend the meeting and would like more information please feel free to contact me.

Susan Benner

CENTURY ON THE WABASH PERMANENT EXHIBIT OPEN AT THE TIPPECANOE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Travel back in time and discover a century of Tippecanoe County history. The Tippecanoe County Historical Association (TCHA) presents, "Century on the Wabash--The Story of Tippecanoe County." This fascinating permanent exhibit will explore the county's rich and varied history told through different modes of transportation. The focus will be on canoes, riverboats, canal boats, trains, automobiles and the roads they traveled and how each affected the community and the county.

Through the research efforts of TCHA, along with teachers and historians, this historical exhibit was developed and will be on display at the Tippecanoe County Historical Museum, Lafayette. The entire first floor of the museum will be transformed into the permanently installed exhibit that will include photographs and interactive displays in addition to many transportation artifacts and objects including a Ford Model-T, a classic motorcycle and a preserved section of the wall from the Wabash and Erie Canal. This unique exhibit will explore history through transportation from canoes to steamboats, building of the Wabash and Erie Canal, the Underground Railroad, trains, the arrival of the automobile and more!

The exhibit continues during regular museum hours; Tuesday through Sunday, 1:00-5:00pm with a small admission charge, \$3.00 for adults and \$1.00 for kids. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity of discovery and exploration of rich local history at the Tippecanoe County Historical Museum. For more information on Century on the Wabash or any of the exhibit events, call 765-476-8411.

CARROLL COUNTY CELEBRATES ITS 175TH BIRTHDAY IN 2003!

Delphi, the county seat, was founded in 1828. Carroll County Old Settlers Association will have its 150th Birthday in 2005. It is the oldest continuous meeting in Indiana, and maybe the nation. Carroll County residents enjoy their history, agriculture, preservation and yet stay up-to-date.

At the 2003 Old Settlers, over 300 people were in attendance. A special feature this year was "First Families" recognition. Genealogy tracing of a family to Carroll County's beginnings, 1824-1855, was presented to the Museum where it was verified. Over 500 people received a "First Family" certificate. This program will continue through the 2004 and 2005 Old Settlers meetings. The Museum also houses HAP- the Historic Archival Program computer. When all is complete, pictures, documents, and newspapers of our past will be readily available from any personal computer.

Adams Mill, the Adams Mill Covered Bridge, and Lancaster Bridge areas all sustained damage during the July 2003 flood. All are being well looked after and will be repaired and maintained for future use. The flood also threatened to soak the floors of the new Wabash & Erie Canal Interpretive Center in Delphi, but was averted. Many homes along our Wildcat, Deer, and Paint Creek areas were severely damaged along with those along the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers. Hundreds of farm acre crops were ruined. This was called a 100 year flood. It will go down in history as a time when the water rose, and so did everyone's volunteer effort and compassion.

In 1900 the county population was 19,953. In 2000, we grew to 20,165, a 1.1% increase. We may rank 73rd of 92 Indiana counties in size, but we must rank high in compassion, volunteerism, and can-do spirit! It's a great place to live, and a peaceful county to visit.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF JAY COUNTY

Jay County is bounded on the north by Adams and Wells Counties, on the east by Mercer and Darke Counties, Ohio, and on the south by Randolph County and on the west by Delaware and Blackford Counties. The area of the county is 377 square miles, or 241,692 acres.

In 1821, Peter Studabaker (born in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, in 1790) settled on the south bank of the Wabash River, at what is now New Corydon, Jay County. Here he built a crude cabin, twelve by eighteen feet, of small round logs, with clapboard roof, held down by "weight poles."

This was the first dwelling erected in the county. There was no other house within thirty-five miles.

Mr. Studebaker intended to make this his permanent home, but the frequent overflow of the river disheartened him; and, after remaining two years, went back to Fort Recovery, Ohio, where he lived twelve years, engaged chiefly in farming, when he moved to Adams County, Indiana, where he died in 1840.

The first person in Jay County was Abram Studabaker, in the little cabin on the Wabash, September 29, 1822.

RAINBOW BEND PARK DEDICATION IN ADAMS COUNTY

On June 28th the Rainbow Bend Park Dedication and grand opening honored centuries of history within its boundaries. Over 120 people attended the various dedications, celebrations, ribbon cuttings in an area that got its name from the great meanders of the Wabash River. The day began with recognition of the present. The Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee of Friends of the Limberlost is responsible for the project, and the DNR Division of Nature Preserves' Regional Ecologist oversees it locally. Many speakers including State Senator Ford, Former State Senator and former DNR Director Larry Macklin, Division Director of Outdoor Recreation, Emily Kress, sponsor of the project, DNR Director of Safety Rick Edwards, former owner Kate Moser, and Jim Briggs of Limberlost Conservation Association spoke of the changes that took place in the recent past to make the park become a reality. The Boy Scouts spoke of the trails they blazed to improve the hiking areas, Ducks Unlimited's project made the area more bird friendly, and canoeists told how the property is more recreational friendly. Contractors continue to make minor improvements to the property to make it more user friendly.

Then, we had a shift to the future with representatives from the Geneva Town council, Geneva Chamber of Commerce, and Geneva Proud speaking of lengthening the hike/bike trail to reach historic downtown Geneva. A spur is planned to connect to the Limberlost State Historic Site where author, photographer, and naturalist Gene Stratton-Porter began her career.

The highlight of the day was the shift to the past. Native American Indians in native dress blessed the reestablished historic Indian trail that follows the old meanders of the Wabash River. Drumming, singing, and dancing brought the area back to its roots of the past.

Then the past, present, and future came together to watch the grand finale of the day as two Red-tailed Hawks were released by Sorin' Hawk raptor rehab. The hawks flew out over the property and landed in the trees along the Wabash River as a symbolic return to nature of Rainbow Bend Park, and the day was complete.

MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI WORKSHOP

BY LOUISE JEWELL

The notice Susan sent out about the River educational workshop caught our attention for two reasons: It was free and it was on the Mississippi. One of our favorite vacation activities has always been to go up and down a river, crossing every bridge or ferry we come to-- especially on the Mississippi. So we arranged a sitter for my dad and took off.

We drove out early, checked out the workshop location and then went on to stay at delightful Washington State Park for the night. Came back to the River the next morning for the day's workshop. Looking back on it, seems incredible to have done/accomplished so much in one day. It would have been very hard for the enthusiasm, knowledge, dedication & commitment, and just a pure sense of fun shown by this group of young people putting on the workshop to have not infected us. It was very similar to that of the commissioners I work with on the WRHCC.

The workshop was held on a revamped tug & barge that is routinely used for river bank clean up. The tug/barge was parked directly under the magnificent Arch. We were to wear a life vest the whole time (and did). Had orientation and several mini workshops right on the barge. One of the most interesting was about the barge industry on the river. A typical tug routinely pushes barges the size of four football fields (if not more) up & down the river, through bridge pilings sometimes just inches bigger than those barges. Those barges represent a major industry in our country.

For lunch we were loaded into a johnny boat and taken about 20Min upriver to a massive sandbar island where a picnic was laid out for us. IMPRESSIVE AND FUN. Here we were given a hands on demonstration of the methods used to infuse school kids with enthusiasm for bottomland reforestation. On the way back we visited the boat of a professional fisherman. This was not my stereotype idea of a pro fisherman or his boat. He is a one man crew on a small boat and spends all day every day all year fishing the river. He had a boatload of fish and told us what they were and which were best, etc. Also told us how the fishing industry on the river had changed over time due to introduced invasive species and pollution. The main pollution being, not farm chemicals that I would have expected, but soil washed into the river. That pollution itself has almost eliminated the mussel industry in the river. Has it affected the Wabash mussels the same? He was so picturesque--what a learning experience.

Went back to the barge for wrap up and evaluation. I came away with a real respect for the river, for the industry it supports, for the people who make their living from it, and for the people who try so hard to keep it such a wonderful resource. It also gave me renewed respect for the people who work so hard for the Wabash. Thank you all.

In addition to all the wonderful images and information we picked up during the day, we were given a packet of information, ideas, experiments, etc to bring back. Most of this will work on the Wabash as well as the Mighty Miss. I'll bring it to the Nov meeting.

FLOATING HISTORY - KAYAKING THE LOWER WABASH BY STACE ENGLAND

Read the great article about Stace England's September 2003 kayaking trip down the Wabash River between Vincennes and New Harmony. You can read the entire article on our website http://www.in.gov/wrhcc/pdfs/floating_history.pdf

DELPHI's CANAL INTERPRETIVE CENTER NEAR COMPLETION

The \$2.5 million dollar Wabash & Erie Canal Interpretive Center in Delphi is now almost complete. The final grant payment documents from the Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc. were delivered last week to DNR's Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. Final certification from DHPA will net the Canal Association the final draw from the \$212,500 Wabash Heritage Corridor Fund approved in 2000.

There is still finishing work on a few exhibits in several of the dozen museum galleries. The project will exceed the grant money as the worth of this project exceeds \$600,000. According to Canal Board President Dan McCain, "this is a milestone in our development of this extensive project. It began as a vision more than a decade ago and now it is a reality. Without the donations of thousands of hours of volunteer time we could never have brought this to a conclusion. On a regular week you could expect 5-10 volunteer craftsmen to be working Monday-Wednesday-Friday mornings on these displays."

In addition, donation of many important artifacts like the massive 1840s "flood gate" timbers donated to this project by the Historic Forks of the Wabash at Huntington have been extremely important. Gifts of hardwood logs such as Walnut, Cherry, Ash, Oak and Sycamore have been cut by another volunteer with a portable sawmill for use in building displays like the full scale model Canal Boat Cabin and the "shanty town" Irish labor camp. Inside the cabin of the boat exhibit feels like you are floating on water and the bunks, table and cargo look just like a 1850s traveler would experience.

The planning, construction and completion of this 12,000 square foot "old looking" new transportation museum is just one more of many phases the Canal Board and volunteers have tackled. The outside of the building looks like downtown Delphi in the mid-nineteenth century. Old photography provided

the details used by the architect to develop these facades even down to the details of the historic windows and doors.

In the mid-1990s, Wabash Heritage Corridor grant dollars helped with the development of much of the seven mile Delphi Historic Trails system and the dredging of the canal itself. Now Delphi has the most significant public accessible section of watered Wabash & Erie Canal in Indiana. Water comes from a discharge of three million gallons of clear groundwater per day donated by the Delphi Limestone Company. They also provide free crushed stone for the trails.

The next big dream according to McCain is to plan, design and construct a full scale canal boat to travel on the beautiful central and northern sections of Delphi's 163 year old man-made waterway. Irish hired for the original construction now are paralleled by the capable cadre of volunteers involved in today's accomplishments.

Come see these many accomplishments during the open hours at the Center. To reach Canal Park, come to the Carroll County Courthouse traffic light in Delphi and go 12 blocks north on Washington Street cross the canal and enter the park. Saturday hours are 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday hours are 1 to 4 pm. Call the Canal Hotline at 765-564-6572 or 765-564-6297.

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